

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

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AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO UNN

AMCONSUL MATAMOROS UNN

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AMCONSUL MERIDA UNN

AMCONSUL MONTERREY UNN

AMCONSUL NUEVO LAREDO UNN

AMCONSUL TIJUANA UNN

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SUBJ: MEXICAN JULY FEDERAL ELECTIONS

REF: MEXICO A-39, JANUARY 31, 1973.

BEGIN SUMMARY: MEXICO SLUGGISHLY WOUND UP THIS WEEK WHAT WAS SURELY THE MOST PRO FORMA ELECTION CAMPAIGN EVER WITNESSED BY REPORTING OFFICER ; A CAMPAIGN TOTALLY PREDICTABLE IN WHICH THE ONLY OPPONENT APPEARED TO BE " ABSTENTIONISM". THERE WAS MEREST PRETENSE OF GENUINE CAMPAIGNING, MOST CANDIDATES OF RULING PARTIDO REVOLUCIONARIO INSTITUTIONAL ( PRI) CAMPAIGNED ONLY TO MINIMUM LEVELS DECREED BY THE PARTY HEIRARCHY, WHO DEMANDED AT LEAST APPEARANCE OF A CAMPAIGN. OPPOSITION PARTY CANDIDATES CAMPAIGNED FOR " LOTTERY SEATS" VIRTUALLY

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GUARANTEED UNDER THE MIXED PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM.

UP FOR CONTEST, IF CONTEST IT CAN BE CALLED, IN THE JULY 1 ELECTIONS ARE ALL SEATS IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND

SEVEN GOVERNORSHIPS, ( QUERETARO, COLIMA, GUANAJUATO, SONORA, NUEVO LEON, SAN LUIS POTOSI, CAMPECHE) , IN ONLY ONE OF WHICH IS PRI CANDIDATE OPPOSED. DEPUTY CANDIDATES AND CAMPAIGNS NOT PARTICULARLY WELL COVERED BY NATIONAL PRESS, WITH CAMPAIGN REPORTING GENERALLY LIMITED TO REGULAR POLITICAL COLUMNISTS AND ASSORTED PAID SPOTS CONTAINING SKETCHY BIOS OF PRI CANDIDATES.

MAJOR EFFORT IN CAMPAIGN PERIOD WAS REALLY HIGH-POWERED VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN. MORE PAID MEDIA TIME AND SPACE DEVOTED TO THIS CAMPAIGN THAN TO ALL POLITICAL PARTIES TOGETHER. MAJOR PUBLIC FIGURES STRESSED PARTICIPATION AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY, WITH NEW AND INCREASING VOTER REGISTRATION FIGURES PUBLISHED WEEKLY.

MUCH TALKED ABOUT " DEMOCRATIC OPENING" WAS MORE EVIDENT IN ORATORY THAN IN PRACTICE, WITH AT LEAST ONE GLARING EXAMPLE OF THE PRI'S OLD " DEDAZO TACTICS EVIDENT IN NUEVO LEON. END SUMMARY.

1. ACTUAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES IN THE FEDERAL DEPUTY ELECTIONS EXTREMELY LIMITED. USUAL AMOUNT OF " PAPER HANGING", PERHAPS A LITTLE LESS USE OF SOUND TRUCKS THAN PREVIOUSLY, AND CONSPICUOUSLY LESS USE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AS A FORUM WERE ALL TYPICAL OF THIS CAMPAIGN. A GREAT DEAL OF DOOR TO DOOR CAMPAIGNING WAS REPORTED IN THE PRESS, BUT MUCH OF THIS BELIEVED GREATLY EXAGGERATED IN THE ATTEMPT TO CREATE THE " CAMPAIGN ATMOSPHERE". PRI CANDIDATES PARTICULARLY TRIED TO PROJECT IMAGE AS ACTIVE CAMPAIGNERS, AS PARTY LEADERS HAVE MADE IT VIRTUALLY A PRECONDITION FOR FURTHER ADVANCEMENT WITHIN PARTY.

2. OPPOSITION PARTY CANDIDATES VIRTUALLY INVISIBLE IN SOME DISTRICTS AND MOUNTED ONLY TOKEN CAMPAIGNS IN OTHERS. REAL OPPOSITION PARTY CAMPAIGN LARGELY CONFINED TO THE APPEARANCE OF TRADITIONAL AND PREDICTABLE PARTY LINE ORATORY IN THE VARIOUS POLITICAL COLUMNS AND PRESS INTERVIEWS OF OPPOSITION LEADERS. ONLY IN SCATTERED MUNICIPALITIES HAVE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES ATTEMPTED ANY REAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
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CAMPAIGNING, AND THESE EFFORTS RECEIVED ONLY MINOR LOCAL COVERAGE. GIVEN SYSTEM PECULIARITIES, THIS WAS ONLY TO BE EXPECTED. PRI DOMINATION EFFECTIVELY ELIMINATES POSSIBILITY OF OPPOSITION GAINING REGULAR OR " PROPIETARIO" SEAT, HENCE OBTAINING THE NEED FOR STRONG LOCAL OR DISTRICT CAMPAIGN. BUT SINCE OPPOSITION PARTIES ASSURED OF MORE OR LESS FIXED NUMBER OF PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SEATS IN ANY EVENT, NATURAL TENDENCY IS TO " CAMPAIGN" FOR THESE SEATS EXCLUSIVELY WITHIN THE PARTY BUREAUCRACY. YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE PARTIDO DE ACCION NACIONAL ( PAN) HAVE SUGGESTED THAT PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION BE ABOLISHED SINCE REAL EFFECT IS TO FORCE OPPOSITION CANDIDATES TO

ABANDON GRASS ROOTS CAMPAIGN IN FAVOR OF A RESTRICTED CAMPAIGN WITHIN PARTY LEADERSHIP FOR THE " LOTTERY" SEATS. AT ANY LEVEL, AND WHATEVER PARTY AFFILIATION, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT FOR ANY CANDIDATE TO " CAMPAIGN" IN THE SENSE THIS TERM USED IN US. SINCE REAL LEGISLATION IS A FUNCTION OF THE EXECUTIVE HERE, CANDIDATE CANNOT CAMPAIGN ON ANY KIND OF LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM, NOR ANY PAST LEGISLATIVE PERFORMANCE BUT CAN ONLY SUPPORT GENERAL PARTY IDEOLOGY AND RECALL PAST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PARTY. SINCE NOMINATION IS DUE TO THE " DEDAZO" OR INTERNAL PARTY MACHINATIONS, HE MUST FOLLOW PARTY LINE, AND WITH IT THE EXECUTIVE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM. ONLY INDEPENDENT FUNCTION OF DIPUTADO IS " CONSTITUENCY SERVICES". AND IN MEXICO, THIS FUNCTION A VITAL PART OF CAMPAIGN AS WELL. BECAUSE OF TOTAL IDENTIFICATION OF PRI WITH GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY, CANDIDATE CAN PROMISE AND DELIVER A NEW SCHOOL OR IMPROVED WATER SYSTEM IN VARIOUS COMMUNITIES OF HIS DISTRICT. NOR IS THIS FUNCTION IN ANY WAY " SUB ROSA" V IT IS OPENLY DONE AND IN GENERAL FAVORABLY COMMENTED UPON IN PRESS.

3. SLIGHTLY MORE INTERESTING WERE THE GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGNS. COLIMA, SONORA AND GUANAJUATO, NUEVO LEON, CAMPECHE AND QUERETARO WILL CHOOSE NEW GOVERNORS IN NEXT SUNDAY' S ELECTION. SIGNIFICANTLY IN ONLY ONE, NUEVO LEON, IS PRI CANDIDATE OPPOSED. NEVERTHELESS, MOST WIDELY PUBLICIZED CAMPAIGNS WERE IN GUANAJUATO AND SONORA, WHERE PRI CANDIDATES, LUIS H. DUCOING GAMBA AND CARLOS ARMANDO BIEBRICH ARE RUNNING UNOPPOSED. HOWEVER, BOTH ARE " BRIGHT YOUNGER COMERS" IN PRI AND GUBERNATORIAL CAMPAIGNS  
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PERCEIVED AS MERE DEVICE TO GIVE WIDER NATIONAL EXPOSURE AS A PRELUDE TO MORE PRESTIGIOUS FUTURE POSTS. DUCOING IN GUANAJUATO, PARTICULARLY ACTIVE, COVERING STATE INTENSIVELY, APPEARING BEFORE EVERY MAJOR INTEREST GROUP, AND RECEIVING MASSIVE COVERAGE IN NATIONAL PRESS. SOME SPECULATION THAT DUCOING MAY EVEN CHERISH PRESIDENTIAL ASPIRATIONS.

4. EQUALLY INTERESTING, BUT FROM ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW, IS THE CASE OF NUEVO LEON . WHILE PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA AND THE PRI HIERARCHY IN GENERAL HAVE MADE MUCH THIS YEAR OF THE SO- CALLED " DEMOCRATIC OPENING" WITHIN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM GENERALLY AND INTERNALLY WITHIN THE PRI, THE CASE OF NUEVO LEON INDICATES PRI STILL READY TO ENFORCE ITS DICTATES IN THE OLD, TRIED METHODS OF PARTY DICTATORSHIP WHEN NECESSARY. LOCAL PRI ADHERENTS IN NUEVO LEON, APPARENTLY TAKING THE PRESIDENT AT HIS WORD, HAD GONE SO FAR AS TO STAGE WHAT WAS VIRTUALLY A NOMINATION DINNER FOR ALFONSO MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ. ( MARTINEZ, A NATIVE REGIOMONTANO, STILL ENJOYS WIDE FOLLOWING IN NUEVO LEON DESPITE FALL FROM POWER IN NATIONAL PRI COUNCILS IN JUNE '71.)

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PRI HIERARCHY IN MEXICO CITY INTERVENED LITERALLY AT THE 11 TH HOUR WITH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PRI CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR OF NUEVO LEON WOULD BE PEDRO ZORRILLA MARTINEZ. WHILE MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ APPEARS RECONCILED TO PARTY DECISION, AND HAS MADE NUMEROUS PUBLIC STATEMENTS RE ADHERENCE TO PARTY " DISCIPLINE", HIS SUPPORTERS NOT SO SUBMISSIVE. REGIONTANTANOS, A VERY INDEPENDENT LOT, HAVE TAKEN DECISION AS PERSONAL AFFRONT TO REGIONAL PRIDE AND INDEPENDENCE. PRI CANDIDATE, ZORRILLA MARTINEZ, HAS MET WITH VERY COOL RECEPTION THROUGHOUT THE STATE, PARTICULARLY IN MONTERREY, DESPITE HIS CONNECTION WITH ONE OF MONTERREY' S " DISTINGUISHED" FAMILIES. ( HE IS IN FACT A COUSIN OF MARTINEZ DOMINGUEZ.) SO SLUGGISH WAS HIS CAMPAIGN THAT IT REQUIRED A PERSONAL APPEARANCE BY PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA IN MONTERREY TO BOLSTER LACKLUSTER CAMPAIGN. ( NUEVO LEON ONLY STATE ECHEVERRIA NEVER PREVIOUSLY VISITED AS PRESIDENT.)

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NUEVO LEON IS THE ONLY STATE IN WHICH PRI CANDIDATE WILL BE OPPOSED. PAN CANDIDATE PEDRO REYES VELASQUEZ HAS

LAUNCHED AN INTENSIVE BUT LIMITED CAMPAIGN AMONG INFLUENTIAL FINANCIAL SECTORS OF STATE. WHILE HE MAY PICK UP FAIRLY SIZEABLE " PROTEST VOTE", THE RESULT IS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION.

5. OTHER EXAMPLES OF THE " DEMOCRATIC OPENING" ARE A BIT MORE PROMISING. TRUE TO CAMPAIGN PROMISES, PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA HAS INSTITUTED CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS LOWERING THE MINIMUM VOTING AGE AND INCREASING MINORITY PARTY REPRESENTATION IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES. ANOTHER MUCH TOUTED ASPECT OF THE DEMOCRATIC OPENING, THE NEW ELECTORAL LAW, IS MORE DIFFICULT TO ASSESS. WHILE PRESUMABLY MAKING IT EASIER FOR NEW PARTIES TO BECOME REGISTERED AND GUARANTEEING MORE EQUITABLE ELECTION PRACTICES, IT IS AT BEST A DOUBTFUL IMPROVEMENT. WHILE FEWER NUMBERS ARE REQUIRED TO EFFECT THE REGISTRATION OF A NEW PARTY, THE NEW LAW REQUIRES THAT PETITIONERS IDENTIFY THEMSELVES BY NUMBER OF THEIR VOTER' S CREDENTIAL, THUS INCREASING POSSIBILITIES OF PRESSURE AND INTIMIDATION OF SIGNERS. REFORM OF ELECTORAL COMMISSIONS EVEN MORE DOUBTFUL ( SEE REFAIR). WHILE IT IS A SMALL AND SHAKY STEP TOWARD ELECTORAL REFORM, IT IS AT LEAST A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION AND INDEED SLIGHTLY MORE CORRECT ELECTION PRACTICES ARE ANTICIPATED FOR THE JULY 1 ELECTION. FREE RADIO AND TELEVISION TIME AVAILABLE TO OPPOSITION PARTIES UNDER NEW ELECTORAL LAW MADE LITTLE IMPACT, MAINLY DUE TO EXTREMELY POOR QUALITY OF PRESENTATIONS.

6. OF ENTIRE CAMPAIGN PERIOD, MOST SPECTACULAR EFFORT WAS GENUINELY HIGH- POWERED AND HIGHLY MOTIVATED VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN. MORE MEDIA TIME AND SPACE DEVOTED TO THIS CAMPAIGN THAN TO ALL POLITICAL PARTIES PUT TOGETHER. MASSIVE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AT VOTER REGISTRATION INCLUDED RADIO AND TELEVISION SPOTS FEATURING WELL KNOWN MEXICAN ENTERTAINERS, NEWSPAPER ADS AND STREET POSTERS WHICH IN THE EARLY PART OF A CAMPAIGN OUTWEIGHED PARTISAN PARTY CAMPAIGNS. PRI CANDIDATES IN THE FEDERAL DISTRICT DEVOTED A MAJOR PART OF THEIR OWN CAMPAIGN TIME TO VOTER REGISTRATION EFFORT. ABSTENTIONISM HAS BEEN A MAJOR CONCERN OF BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND PRI.

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7. SERIOUSNESS OF ABSTENTIONISM SEEN IN DECISION OF NUMEROUS PAN COMMITTEES TO RUN NO CANDIDATES. IN BAJA CALIFORNIA, FEELING RAN SO HIGH THAT STATE COMMITTEE ADOPTED ABSTENTIONIST PLATFORM IN FLAGRANT DEFIANCE OF NATIONAL PAN CONVENTION DECISION TO PARTICIPATE, RESULTING IN DISMISSAL OF ENTIRE STATE COMMITTEE. BUT ACTION TOO LATE TO ALLOW NEW COMMITTEE TO RECRUIT CANDIDATES AND GET THEM REGISTERED. ( OPPOSITION PARTY PARTICIPATION GENERALLY QUITE EXTENSIVE. PPS RAN CANDIDATES IN ALL DISTRICTS. PARM PARTICIPATION SHOWED CHECKERED PATTERN, RUNNING

SOME CANDIDATES IN ALMOST ALL STATES, BUT NOT ALL DISTRICTS. PAN RAN CANDIDATES IN ALL STATES, SAVE BAJA CALIFORNIA, SKIPPING ONLY THOSE DISTRICTS WHERE PARTICIPATION DEEMED TOO COSTLY.) VARIOUS REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS, AMONG THEM MOVIMIENTO DE ACCION UNIDO SOCIALISTA (MAUS) WAGING " NO VOTE" CAMPAIGN IN NORTHERN MEXICO, OR ALTERNATIVELY URGING DISSIDENTS TO MARK BALLOTS NPR (NUEVO PARTIDA REVOLUCIONARIO). WHILE PUBLIC FIGURES SUCH AS SECRETARY OF GOVERNMENT MOYA PALENICA HAVE STRESSED MEXICO' S RELATIVELY HIGH DEGREE OF VOTER PARTICIPATION (65 PERCENT IN 1970 VIS- A- VIS 51 PERCENT IN US ELECTION OF SAME YEAR) THESE FIGURES SOMEWHAT DOUBTFUL AND GENERAL PUBLIC APATHY TOWARD THE ENTIRE ELECTORAL PROCESS WIDESPREAD AND HIGHLY VOCAL. BECAUSE OF INTENSE EFFORT TO CREATE IMAGE OF VIABLE MULTIPARTY SYSTEM, PRI IS EXTREMELY ANXIOUS TO PRODUCE A BETTER SHOWING ON ELECTION DAY. THROUGHOUT LATTER PART OF CAMPAIGN PERIOD, VOTER REGISTRATION FIGURES RELEASED WEEKLY, WITH FINAL TOTALS GIVEN AT 24.5 MILLION REGISTERED VOTERS, OUT OF A POSSIBLE 26 MILLION ELEGIBLE. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO OBSERVE VOTER TURNOUT ON JULY 1.

8. CONCLUSION: NO SURPRISES ANTICIPATED IN JULY 1 ELECTION RESULTS. PRI WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY SWEEP THE ENTIRE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND ALL SEVEN GOVERNORSHIPS. PAN WILL CONTINUE TO SHOW MODERATE INCREASES IN OVERALL VOTE COUNT, BUT PROBABLY NOT ENOUGH TO WIN A - PROPRIETARIO" SEAT. ALL RECOGNIZED OPPOSITION PARTIES EXPECTED TO INCREASE REPRESENTATION IN CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES VIA THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT, PROBABLY WHETHER OR NOT THE ELECTION RETURNS JUSTIFY IT. HOWEVER, GIVEN PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA' S STRONG PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO " DEMOCRATIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPENING", WE WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT A VICTORIOUS PAN DIPUTADO CANDIDATE MIGHT ACTUALLY BE ALLOWED TO CLAIM HIS SEAT. SUCH A DECISION, IF IT COMES, WOULD COME FROM VERY HIGHEST LEVELS, PROBABLY THE PRESIDENT HIMSELF INTERVENING.

9. AS FAR AS ECHEVERRIA AND HIS ADMINISTRATION ARE CONCERNED, THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THIS FIRST ( AND ONLY) NATIONAL ELECTION DURING HIS TERM OF OFFICE WILL BE THE OVERALL TURNOUT OF VOTERS. THIS IS THE REASON WHY SO MUCH EMPHASIS HAS BEEN PLACED ON REGISTRATION AND VOTING BECAUSE A LOW TURNOUT WOULD INDICATE GENERAL APATHY AND DISBELIEF IN HIS WIDELY PUBLICIZED " DEMOCRATIC OPENING". THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATES WILL BE ON THE ALERT FOR MEANS OF DISCOVERING DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN ACTUAL VOTER TURNOUT AND REPORTED OVERALL VOTES, AS WELL AS ANY TINKERING OF RESULTS IN DISPUTED DISTRICTS.

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